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ABSTRACT

Through their own inventiveness and persistence, adults are circumventing institutional indifference and creating alternative educational networks to teach themselves art. Problems that must be overcome are as follows: inadequate instructor preparation, a generally narrow array of programs in most community centers with the preponderance of offerings at the introductory level, and art instruction in multipurpose community education centers that do not often have the appropriate facilities. Problems within colleges and universities include the following: the preoccupation with the full-time student, the artwork/artplay dichotomy, absence of an extensive professional curriculum to train art educators to work with adults, and persisting and prevailing negative views of the abilities of older adults. At some universities, a largely invisible, extrainstitutional network for informal group learning exists. These networks resemble clubs and are a mixture of social activities plus art. Several trends present opportunities for art educators to reach larger numbers of potential students: the aging population, the growing availability of places where adults can study art, and a heightened art awareness. Both Grandma Moses and Winston Churchill have legitimized the struggling amateur. A need exists for current visible examples of eminent and productive adult artists as motivators for new generations of adult art practitioners. (Contains 29 references.) (YLB)

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WHAT IF GRANDMA MOSES ATTENDED NIGHT SCHOOL? STRATEGIES FOR REPRIORITIZING ADULT ART EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of issues influencing the practice of adult art education in the United States and also recommends strategies for increasing participation.

Some of the topics covered include motivating factors which prompt student demand, instructor preparation and effectiveness, determinants of institutional support, program varieties and their objectives ("artwork" vs. "artplay"), and why older adults may choose to become "second career artists" in their retirement.

There is a review of the career of American artist Grandma Moses (1876-1961) who became highly popular as a celebrity adult artist during the period 1951-1961. This research demonstrates that her fame stimulated other adults to also practice art. During the same period Winston Churchill, the former British Prime Minister, also emerged as another symbolic amateur adult artist.

The paper concludes that there is a present need for current visible examples of eminent and productive adult artists as motivators for new generations of adult art practitioners.

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Adult Artplay vs. Artwork

The title of this paper explicitly reveals its conclusion- that adult art education is badly in need of some new celebrity status to raise its position within the art/art education establishment. This problem of adult art education is shared, in part, by all the arts in America which inhabit an ambiguous and sometimes contradictory place within our society. Although important sources for both entertainment and cultural enrichment, the arts have also always been in danger of being relegated to the periphery- as less important in the eyes of the general public than pursuits more directly associated with earning a living (McConathy, 1988; Manegold, March 1994). And in the way that values tend to be consistent within the various subsystems of a culture, is it any surprise that among arts educators, arts activities concerned with work are perceived as being more important and valuable than those pursued for their own sake? This, in a nutshell, is the crux of the adult education problem: There is no active professional job market in adult art education and adult students themselves are not, for the most part, vocationally oriented in their art education pursuits.

The term adult art education for the purposes of this paper is intended to apply to amateur involvement in the practice of the visual arts by adults- not principally for financial gain but for their own sake as a hobby or avocation. This is to be contrasted with continuing professional education

(CPE) for practicing artists or the participation of adults in conventional degree or certificate programs designed primarily for other constituencies, such as full-time undergraduate or graduate students.

Although these latter two categories of CPE and credential oriented art education are undeniably parts of the world of adult education it is important to differentiate between the realms of "artwork" and "artplay" since these two categories help frame much of the subsequent discussion. The former is the arena of the professional fine or applied artist, the art/artist educator, and also of the full-time art student, undergraduate or graduate who aspires to a vocation in the arts. It increasingly requires formal and advanced education, often certificates and credentials in one form or another. Curricula is more often standardized and carefully structured and emanates from a college or university setting.

By way of comparison, artplay is at the antipode and is the domain of the hobbyist. Its pursuit, while having varying degrees of importance for the practitioner, is not viewed as a livelihood, the participants either having other income-earning pursuits, or are retired, or otherwise not dependent upon the need to earn an income from their art endeavors. The category of artplay is more heterogeneous than that of artwork along the axes of commitment, ability, program format, and cost. For example, the variable of fee could range from free, or low cost, neighborhood evening courses or a high priced painting seminar in southern France costing thousands of dollars.

Since the field of adult art education encompasses both artwork and artplay the reader may legitimately ask why the paper is delimited in this manner? There are two reasons.

First, and foremost, that is the way the term "adult education" is used in the art education literature where it refers exclusively to non-credit, non-degree, informal studies without any reference to the other types of art study undertaken by adults. Second, my own contact with the field of adult art education was initially, and is still largely, through the less formal array of programs and networks of art education. Having become directly involved in a number of workshops, informal courses, and art groups of varying duration and quality during the past few years I've been struck by the range of student and instructor abilities, and especially by the different ways in which people organize themselves around the pursuit of art knowledge. This personal involvement has stimulated me to learn more about the adult art education in which I am engaged.

The dissimilarity between the importance attached to learning art by adult students and the relative disinterest and lack of enthusiasm accorded to this phenomenon by members of the traditional educational establishment is striking and has been noted by other observers (Hoffman, Greenberg, Fitzner 1980; Brown, 1983; Roberts, 1987). Yet, even without the blessings of mainstream art/artist educators, the enterprise thrives at the margin of official art education programs and spills out into a proliferation of courses, workshops, institutes, books, magazines, self-instructional videotapes, and broadcast media all devoted to adult art education in a stunning variety of forms.

"What then is the problem?" one may ask. If adults, through their own persistence and inventiveness, are circumventing institutional indifference and creating alternative educational networks to teach themselves art does this not free colleges and universities to concentrate on more

resource intensive professional studies for which they are better suited? Especially if the hobbyistic needs and abilities of adults do not smoothly mesh with the requirements of more serious practitioners.

Problems with Adult Art Education

I can vividly recall the anxiety I experienced several years ago at my first evening watercolor class. This non-credit, fee supported, beginners level course was sponsored by the University Crafts Center at my school and was intended for anyone on campus or within the community interested in the subject. It was my first organized contact with art since elementary school almost four decades earlier. The students in my adult course had varying degrees of prior experience, although more than half of them were true novices like myself who could not seem to get their fingers around a brush. In my own case I also showed up with the wrong brushes (something I still do) producing some additional acute embarrassment.

The instructor, a retired professional well on in years, wasted little time in expressing disdain for suburbanites who wanted to learn how to paint pretty pictures. He was openly critical of the course format (too short), course enrollment (too large) and the facilities (poor lighting). His course would focus on the fundamentals which was the way he learned in art school many years earlier.

By the second session one woman had been reduced to tears by his ridicule of her ability and soon vanished from the course. Within three weeks half of the students had stopped coming. This did not seem to concern the instructor who wanted a smaller class size at the outset. He continued along his educational trajectory which consisted of demonstrating his own virtuosity and then observing and

criticizing students who fell short of the mark. Those who remained for the entire course had little to show for their efforts beyond some gradated washes which generated slight open enthusiasm for the further pursuit of this medium. I can still hear him declaring that this was how he learned!

Although I was pleased to find this particular type of pedagogy not repeated in subsequent courses I have since taken, instructors' inability to understand the needs and aspirations of their adult students, as well as the special features of adult education, is striking and disappointing. Over and over again I have observed missed opportunities for connecting with students' initial fervor causing unnecessary frustrations and dissatisfactions, contributing to their dropping out.

Instruction in beginner level courses appears to be rarely based on studies of how best to teach novice students, adults or otherwise, and instead replicates the ways faculty themselves learned (Roberts, 1987). Since adult art instructors are often likely to be adults themselves, sometimes senior citizens, their distance from current teaching practices is likely to be far removed from prevailing norms. Since the resources for part-time teacher training and staff development are unavailable in poorly funded adult community center programs there is little opportunity for these faculty to be exposed to other approaches through in-service training. In fact, the part-time, migratory teaching staff is a faculty in name only since occasions to meet and act collectively are virtually non-existent. Thus, adequate instructor preparation among those who teach this clientele is one serious problem that must be overcome if students are to truly benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

A second problem is in curriculum. The array of programs in most community centers is generally narrow with the preponderance of offerings at the introductory level. Roberts (1987) in her study of community art programs noted the dependence of these centers on fee income and thus the tendency to offer courses with large enrollments at the lowest common denominator of ability despite instructor desires to individualize course content and for smaller class size. A type of Greshams law for continuing education operates- high enrollment courses driving out low. The traditional low funding base for community arts, the small staff size, a reliance upon unpaid volunteers to help with administration, and the absence of a distinct philosophy of adult education to offset or counteract a tendency to simply respond to student enrollment trends, all contribute to a climate where registrations are likely to be the most powerful vector in determining educational policy within the community center.

Additionally, multipurpose community education centers do not often have the appropriate facilities for art instruction. This circumstance will tend to eliminate opportunities for students to learn media for which special equipment or supplies are needed such as in sculpture, printmaking, and photography. There is therefore a tendency in these non-specialized community centers to limit courses to drawing, watercolor, and some crafts. Depending upon the availability of easels, access to other types of painting courses may also be restricted. The absence of a dedicated, well equipped environment for adult art instruction undermines students who are serious about learning art in two ways. Institutional ad hoc-ism communicates to students through the physical facilities that a serious commitment to the arts is not possible in this environment. More significantly, chances to experiment in depth and with other

art media are diminished by the absence of appropriate studio space.

The cumulative negative synergy between truncated course options, teaching and administrative staffs lacking in pedagogical professionalism, and limited facilities combine to depress program demand well below what the actual current enrollment potential may be. Pankratz (1988, p.12) underscores this need for greater creativity in audience and program development, the need for professional training, and a broader view of marketing among arts administrators if this sector is to improve the quality of its offerings.

The problems within colleges and universities, though substantially different from those of community centers, present further difficulties for adults seeking to pursue art study.

Traditional Art Institutions and the Adult Student

As indicated earlier, the preoccupation of most traditional art education institutions is the full-time student although one begins to note the emergence of low residency, part-time art education degree programs for working, adult students. These combine independent study and tutorials with short term campus residencies, usually for several weeks during the summer or winter when more adults are free (see Vermont College, 1994). This pattern follows a distance learning format for undergraduate and graduate degree programs not uncommon in the United States for at least the past ten years, Syracuse University being one well-known example. And for the past hundred years there have been a handful of specialized institutions, albeit non-degree, like the Art Students League and the National Academy of Design, both of New York which have excelled in providing part-time programs, both day and evening, that compare favorably with

regular degree curricula.

The reluctance of traditional programs and educators to embrace adult students stems, in part, from the artwork/artplay dichotomy alluded to earlier to which can be added the absence of an extensive professional curriculum to train art educators to work with adults. But the problem is magnified by a persisting and prevailing negative view towards the abilities of older adults held by both younger and older people alike (Bloom, 1979, p.17). Conversely, Bloom pointed out that the similarities between adult and younger students outweighed the differences suggested by the popular stereotypes (1979, p.iii). Therefore controlling for prior education level it should be possible to identify and recruit student cohorts, regardless of age, comparable in their ability to learn art if the institutional and faculty motivation existed to do so.

The judgments of mainstream educators towards adult students are also likely to be based on their attitudes towards adult education itself which can become a limiting frame of reference for adult students. Thus, since most community center adult education courses are at the beginners level, adult students as a group can be easily viewed as potentially inappropriate and gauche, members in advanced, university level programs- an ad hominem argument at best. In this way the present lean educational opportunities for adults in some communities are used as a justification for restricting entry to more sophisticated programs.

The quandary of improving and enhancing opportunities for adult art education exists at both ends of the educational spectrum, informal and formal. And there is a linkage between what is done in one sector and how this can influence developments in the other. At my own university,

several art department studio faculty enjoy working with adult students. These two, neither of whom are tenured, are exceptions for the department which emphasizes research and full-time instruction. Although mature adults enroll in both regular undergraduate and graduate programs it is a small number since they must be able to adjust their lives to the full-time credit workload and largely daytime scheduling. The existence of an ample pool of traditional 18-22 year old full-time students and a university reward structure emphasizing research and full-time instruction obviates any apparent need for change. The situation at my school is, with some minor variations replicated elsewhere preserving an almost closed academic circle. Differences arising from college location and traditions may expand opportunities for adults somewhat. I am thinking here of schools that have a strong night school philosophy such as the University of California at Berkeley or The New School (New York City) and the adequate resources to deliver programs to additional groups of students. Or the extraordinary commitment of a small number of faculty over time can create a significant, albeit small, beachhead.

Of the two art department faculty at my university one teaches credit courses in the evening and during the summer when adult students are more likely to attend. The second professor teaches undergraduate painting courses and also leads an informal sketch group that regularly meets weekend mornings at the campus for life drawing. This latter example is a fine illustration of a peer learning group with the members sharing responsibilities for scheduling models, arranging the studio, and collecting fees. There is no curriculum <u>per se</u> beyond the life drawing sessions though participants regularly offer to each other helpful critiques, and there are usually discussions of current gallery shows and museum exhibitions, amidst an ongoing

discussion of art. Some of these sketch group students will be enrolled in both credit and non-credit art programs, either simultaneously, or sequentially from term to term. Most, however, opt for the informal non-credit venue.

With minor variations in organization and subject matter, there are also two other university based sketch groups whose only connection to the college is the use of its facilities. In addition there are a sprinkling of informal community groups such as the Night Heron Guild which is composed of a number of "retired professional women who meet weekly to learn, paint and socialize" (Night Heron Guild, 1994). Recently the members of this club had mounted an exhibition of their work at the village library. I also know of a woman who regularly hosts meetings a small group of ceramicists in her home. How many other local art and craft groups exist are beyond my speculation. This itself is an area for further research.

These are all examples of a largely invisible, but ubiquitous, extra-institutional network for informal group learning. They are a mixture of social activities plus art, resembling "clubs" more than anything else. Some Swedish study circles come to mind as the closest institutional analogy (Oliver, 1987). Existing beyond the community centers and universities clubs are participant run. But, they, like the universities, tend to be closed systems with the factor of social compatibility being a major determinant of admission. Therefore, in addition to their relative invisibility, or low profile, they may also be inaccessible to those who do not fit in with each club's informal recruitment strategy and the tendency of successful small groups to move toward homogeneity (Zander, 1990).

It is clear that if greater overlap existed between the

universities and the other institutional and informal providers all would benefit. Colleges can offer better equipped facilities, a technically accomplished faculty and a more felicitous environment for some adults than most public schools, community centers, or clubs. On the other hand community centers can be more appropriate for beginning level students or for those seeking specialized skills or experiences not available in traditional curricula. But as yet the absence of perceived rewards, or mandates for that matter, have precluded this evolution towards deliberate cooperation.

Targets of Opportunity Now Possible

There are several trends which now present opportunities for art educators to reach larger numbers of potential students in the immediate years ahead if they so desire. First, the aging North American population of baby boomers constitutes a prime present and future audience for adult arts education (Bloom, 1979, pp. 18,38). Compared with prior generations, this group has higher education levels and is therefore more likely to continue their education well into adulthood (Merriam and Cafferella, 1991, p. 8). Because of their prior extensive experience with schooling and education in formal, structured settings, they are also just as likely to take classes as to study alone (Bloom, 1979, p. 36).

The second factor is the growing availability of places where adults can study art. Jones (1994) in a recent study estimated 16,000 annual registrations among fifteen Atlanta area community art centers, a total that does not reflect higher education institutions or religious and social organizations also offering art programs in that city. Nationally, an American Council for the Arts study in 1981 reported that by 1980 "easy" accessibility to arts and crafts had risen to 63% up from 54% in 1975 (Degge, 1987, p.

174). With increased urbanization this percentage is likely to increase. This does not include the thousands of higher education institutions and ubiquitous public school districts, all offering still further locations and sites.

Third, we are in a period of heightened arts awareness principally through the impact of electronic communications media which can create manifold opportunities for the public to experience and be informed about the arts in one form or another. This heightened visibility is not restricted to the performing arts. For example, the media coverage and controversy surrounding the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe did more to educate the public about his art than would have normally seen the museum exhibitions in 1988 and 1989. Major museum exhibitions from King Tut to Matisse with their attendant media exposure elevated them to significant cultural activities thus stimulating curiosity and enhanced attendance.

That greater arts awareness stimulates a greater number of people to learn about art seems axiomatic. Therefore it is critical to identify circumstances that can lead to greater visibility and thus a more encouraging atmosphere for adult art education. One of my underlying assumptions is that by concentrating greater positive attention on this subject the problem is addressed from the demand (student) dimension. In answer to how might a larger number of adults be encouraged to become directly involved with the arts a brief case study of the Grandma Moses phenomenon is presented as a way of dramatizing how the focused attention on this one celebrity adult artist created a groundswell of popular enthusiasm and interest in adult art education within the media and among the public. I also touch briefly upon the case of Winston Churchill another famed amateur popular during the same period. It was not possible for me to assess

in the current research, however, the institutional response to these phenomena, the supply side if you will. This is to be addressed in subsequent research.

The Case of Grandma Moses

Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1876-1961), known affectionately as Grandma Moses, may be the most widely known American artist, both nationally and abroad. She sprang to popularity almost overnight in the 1940's following several successful museum and gallery exhibitions and public appearances, and within a few brief years became familiar to millions through her captivating, innocent paintings of country life, and their prolific reproductions (see O. Kallir, 1947; J. Kallir, 1982). Extensive media coverage, which was unique for an American artist, in print as well as in the then new vehicle of television helped spread her fame world-wide, making the name Grandma Moses a sobriquet for any mature person dabbling in art.

Hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles were written about Grandma during the roughly two decades of her popularity, enough to fill eight thick scrapbooks of clippings which I partially reviewed for this project at the Galerie St. Etienne in New York City. Millions of Christmas cards were sold with her bucolic winter scenes creating an iconic identification of her imagery with this important national holiday. This widespread popularity, uncommon for living (or dead, for that matter) American artists led to allegations of a synthetic Grandma Moses "industry" that craftily concocted the imagery and then commercialized her success. Grandma's tendency, borne out of a Yankee tradition of compulsive industry, to work on three or four paintings simultaneously in order to satisfy demands for her work- also fueled the cynicism of her detractors. Eventually she produced over 1600 works, averaging 70 a year - a truly

staggering accomplishment for someone who only began painting at 78!

Regardless of the accusations of facile virtuosity, the American public was enthralled with Grandma Moses. This was art that could be readily understood and appreciated, unlike the mysterious abstract expressionist squiggles, stripes, and drips then being championed as the new American art by supporters of Jackson Pollock and his New York School cohort. Despite the mass marketing which accompanied her success Grandma became a symbol of traditional, perhaps threatened and neglected, American values: the importance of family ties; the need for establishing roots in the land; a celebration of community/village/small town rural life, the innocence of childhood; and, of course, the belief that with hard work you can accomplish anything, a continuation of the Horatio Alger myth popular earlier in the century.

It is impossible not to look at her paintings without smiling in appreciation for the beguiling glimpses she provides of a vanished, idyllic, bucolic life. We want so badly to believe in the pristine incorruptibility of these visions we gladly suspend cynicism and disbelief. The naive quality of the paintings themselves- crudely rendered figures, a lack of perspective, the formulaic approach to composition and themes- reenforce the unreality of the subject material, especially for the late 20th century urbanite. In "The Trappers II" (1943) there are a number of separate, loosely related, vignettes that combine to produce a Breughel-like (of whom she was unaware) composition. As the two trappers pause at the small frozen winter pond they watch small groups of children engaged in different seasonal games- ice skating, hockey, skiing. At the same time a sleigh with occupants is paused on the stone bridge crossing the pond, and another man nearby, carrying a rifle, also

stands, at rest regarding the frolicking children on the ice. In the near background there is a clustering of farm buildings and a modest country church with its spire standing out like a lighthouse against the late afternoon winter sky. Whether a scene like this ever existed except in the imaginations of artist and viewer is no matter for debate. It is, nevertheless, the image we carry within us as an Ur-winter against which we judge less picturesque and attractive reality.

Beyond her uncanny ability to produce these entrancing fantasies of rural American, she existed on another level as an inspiration for others who wished to try their hands at something new in adulthood. The term lifelong learning was just coming into vogue and was used to make connections between Grandma Moses and others embarking on similar educational journeys (LaFrance, July 1947). Unlike Norman Rockwell, her only serious popular rival for depicting homespun Americana, Grandma remained like many of her fans an amateur trying to do better, but never transcending the confines of artistic primitivism. By way of contrast, Rockwell's prolific highly professional Saturday Evening Post cover illustrations evinced a masterly command of draftsmanship and composition that were light years beyond Grandma's abilities.

She was considered by her fans and detractors alike a "primitive" denoting the absence of any academic training in her art as well as its distance from accepted traditional canons. Lately the term "outsider art" has been coined to apply to those artists whose work deviates significantly from the mainstream or who are not artists in the conventional sense, of having a social role or principal identification as such although they may be art makers (Hall, M.D. & Metcalf, E.W., 1994). This untutored aspect,

so clearly palpable in Grandma's work, became its prime recommendation to others similarly without artistic training who also felt the urge to create. If Grandma Moses could simply pick up a paintbrush and win recognition why could not they? At the very least, a door was being opened for creative play and adventure.

In this spirit, a Harper's Bazaar article entitled "She Picked Up a Paintbrush at Seventy-Seven" (December 1942, p. 42) holds up Grandma's story "for all those who despair because ... the hard work of living came between them and a talent; and for all those who believe with us that old age is only a phrase...." Similarly an article by Robert McCain in The Woman (May 1943), "She Took Up Art at 76," made clear that the desire to paint, though long deferred, could not ultimately be denied.

Although the analogy between Grandma Moses and amateur "Sunday painters" was not explicitly made by Charlotte Hughes' "Confessions of a Sunday Painter" which appeared in the New York Times Magazine (August 1945) the continuity between the upstate farm woman and New York sophisticate is clear and unmistakable. Hughes' opinion that "[you] don't need any training to start. Some of the best of us are innocent of all knowledge of perspective, composition, and color relationships...." (p.14) was clearly in the Mosean vein. But there was also some ambivalence evidenced in the article about "primitives" who break the rules but still make the money, something beyond the reach, and even aspirations, of most Sunday painters.

In yet another New York Times Magazine article about Grandma Moses "Grandma Moses who Began to Paint at 78" by S. J. Wolf (December 1945) she is compared to Sarah of the Bible who had a child at age 90 with Abraham, probably Western

culture's most famous account of female generativity. The fascination of the New York Times with Grandma Moses perhaps reached its apotheosis in a Magazine cover story written by Grandma herself ("How I Paint and Why") wherein her narrative was presented in her own words with their unorthodox idiosyncratic spelling, indicative of the true primitive (May 1947). The honest emotions as well as the direct manner of expression come across as if to refute any possible charges of inauthenticity.

Although the artistic community as a whole was highly critical of Grandma Moses (J. Kallir, 1982) exceptions could be found. The artist Karl Zerbe, who was also Director of the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, favorably commented that painting, in recent years, has spread from a small select few to a national pastime. He found the advent and popularity of Grandma Moses propitious in the light of this trend, and on a more personal level acknowledged his own affinity with her methods (Davidson, October 1949).

The same positive, stimulating effect was also noted by Jess Stearn in the New York News (November 1949) in "Everybody is Painting Now, and We Don't Mean Houses." Stearn wrote "Thanks to Grandma Moses and a few others, nearly everyone, it seems, is painting today.... For some reason, women everywhere have the feeling that if Grandma Moses can paint, so can they." He went on to mention the Art Students League of New York and described the flexible, adult oriented curriculum, providing anecdotal accounts of aspiring adult students among them a restaurant worker, a truck driver, and a lawyer. This article also drew attention to Hollywood where the craze was proving popular among tineseltown actors and actresses. In fact, the article was illustrated with a picture of movie stars shown painting.

If Grandma Moses was the patron saint of amateur adult painters, Winston Churchill, the former British Prime Minister, Member of Parliament, not to mention at least a half dozen other illustrious titles, was their poet laureate. Both were at two different poles: Moses the "primitive" and Churchill the "academic" operating within the accepted traditions of European landscape painting including Constable, Turner, and the French Impressionists whose work he knew and emulated to varying degrees.

Churchill's Painting as a Pastime was published in 1948 and reissued in 1949, 1950, 1964, and 1985. Originally the essays appeared within a larger collection of works in 1932, but evidently the soaring popularity of amateur painting in the post World War II world generated enough interest to sustain multiple printings. There were even recordings sold of the former Prime Minister reading selections from the book and also an international touring exhibition of his paintings.

Churchill's advocacy of adult art was in tune with the British genteel tradition, noted for sophisticated amateurism which could itself be elevated to an art form. It was not unusual within the English upper class to find people with the unusual combination of means and leisure and sometimes even ability to accomplish truly wonderful things. Churchill, no doubt, saw himself in the tradition of Ruskin, save for his self-confessed "audacity," advising others to jump right into painting as opposed to lengthy preparatory study in drawing and copying from woodcuts and plaster casts (p. 15). In vivid Churchillian prose he advocated a "joyride in a paintbox" (p.16) as the perfect tonic to restore mental and emotional health. His exhortation to "Try it if you have not done so - before you die" (p. 19) resonated with the growing numbers of willing amateurs who just needed some

additional encouragement to begin their own jaunts.

Both Grandma Moses and Winston Churchill legitimized the struggling amateur and it is clear that as symbols they resonated with a sympathetic public, some of whom also wished to learn and make art. This was at a time in American national history which coincided with a concern about the proper use of free time and the growing number of elderly. There was then an optimistic view of a economically successful society wherein the twin forces of mechanization/automation and prosperity would produce an idle, but well educated leisure class. This was, in part, the motivation behind the Ford Foundation's establishment of the Fund for Adult Education in 1951 and its involvement with liberal adult education (Edelson, 1992).

The "Second Career" Artist

Research on second career artists, those who decided later in life to pursue art as a vocation or serious avocation, reveals that the path of Grandma Moses was far from unusual. With encouragement from her father she had painted pretty pictures as a child, sometimes using berry juice to color her drawings (Moses, 1952, p.26). But the pressures of work and family, and the discouragement of her mother who was "more practical, [and who] thought that I could spend my time in other ways" (p.27) forced Grandma to put aside her childhood interests to work and raise a family. Nevertheless, despite disincentives she maintained a connection with art as an adult by dabbling "little pictures for Christmas gifts and things like that. " (p.125). Perhaps because of the low profile, or suppressed, nature of this activity her husband was unaware of his wife's ability and preoccupation until just before he died. After her children had grown, she was encouraged by family members to do worsted pictures in yarn, a common folk pursuit for women

(p. 129). Eventually these became too difficult for her arthritic hands and she was impelled to start oil painting at age 78.

Hearn's research (1972) on second career artists is very apt and appropriate in light of Grandma's artistic trajectory. He observes that it is not unusual for second career artists- those who develop as artists later in life after first pursuing other interests- "to have [first] become interested in art at an early age, and even educated to their art, but they allowed their talents to remain secondary to economic or familial considerations until circumstances allowed them to return to their more youthful interest." (p. 359). Hearn's sample of 143 artists contained 71 that were of this second career type. The largest concentration were painters or sculptors although musicians and actors were also represented in the group studied.

Hearn, commenting on the attractiveness of art as a career later in life remarks that there is no compulsory retirement age. Instead, older artists have both the opportunity to teach and to earn extra income from the sale of art work. More importantly for his study, becoming a second career artist offers the retiree the chance to maintain social identity with the development of a positive new role, avoiding isolation and anomie. Although in the case of Grandma Moses she asserts that she would have "raised chickens" or given "pancake suppers" as ways of staying active and productive in her senior years (Moses, 1952, p. 138). This remarkable detachment from her role as a worldwide celebrity and artist further endeared her to her fans.

Factors Influencing Adult Learning

The supposition that the examples of Grandma Moses and

Winston Churchill as symbolic adult artists encouraged others to also make art rests upon the special nature of adult education as a voluntary activity. By this we mean that participation in non-degree, and more importantly, non-vocationally oriented programs is primarily at the initiative of the individual and is not compelled nor mandated by any outside agency nor institution.

While it is true that to focus on individual responsibility downplays the role of institutions as either encouraging or discouraging participation, it is significant in the case of adult art education, as the term is used in this paper, that personal initiative is the prime mover. It is however dependent on an awareness of educational options available. Bloom states that this is the "critical factor" to the "future magnitude of adult art educational growth." (1979, p. 36)

If Grandma Moses, and also Winston Churchill for that matter, had attended night school for the purposes of learning art it is plausible to suggest that this factor could and would have a considerable impact on enrollments. Much like an excellent restaurant, movie, or book review in a well regarded journal excites and reenforces public interest and, more significantly demand, it is highly conceivable that the same dynamics would operate in the sphere of adult learning. The power of Grandma and Churchill to inspire others is based upon the universality of what they represented as symbols. More than a farm woman or former Prime Minister each embodied the inherent human quest for self definition and creativity, the pursuit of some important dream that could also generate vicarious pleasure for others. If each had attended night school instead of learning art on their own a missing piece of the puzzle (the "how to") would have been provided for the public,

additionally removing some of the mystery of art making. In this imaginary scenario institutions would also quickly seize the opportunity for educating thousands of new students and expand their programs accordingly.

For those interested in reprioritizing adult art education several research/action strategies then emerge as potentially useful. There is first the need to identify successful second career artists. And second, to draw attention to the role of adult art/education in the development of these people. By calling attention to the reality of the achievements of this cohort a way for demonstrating its attainability by others is also secured. In short, many Grandma Moses and Winston Churchills will beget still more.

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